

I am an Amateur Radio Extra Class, ARRL VE, Laurel VE, and EPA Assistant Section Manager. Please note that I usually am the one conducting the Morse Code element at VE sessions that I officiate at.

I have logged over 40,000 personal QSO's in Amateur Radio since 1997 and less than 1% are Morse Code contacts. My contacts in voice (SSB) have enabled me to achieve are verified by over 27,000 QSL cards from 306 countries, over this period of time.

My 33 years as an amateur radio operator have not eliminated the use of CW from my station, however I have never found CW to of great interest to me in the hobby. I was a Radioman in the Navy and found that I used RTTY more in the military than I did CW.

I find that CW is on the same level as RTTY, PSK31, and PACKET modes. These modes while they are efficient, they are very insulated from personal warmth. I read a lot into voice inflection, and voice fluctuation.

With today's equipment, most CW operators generate code by a digital means, keyer, computer or other. Gone are the days when you would hear on the "air a real FIST" that long identified the person on the other end before the actual contact took place. I used to refer to the "Great Lakes Swing" in 1970 when I would heard CW operators with heavily weighted dashes compared to quick rapid dots. Now all I hear is "perfect code". I may as well learn to read RTTY and PSK31 by ear as well as CW.

Lets face reality, Morse code has moved ahead as all modes of amateur radio have. It is now just a digital mode to most users. The fashion of code readers, and code generation equipment is available and preferred by most to send and receive code. It is time we remove the code requirement as a separate exam in amateur radio. There is no reason that we cannot continue with the use of Morse code as we do the digital modes in amateur radio I hardly think Samuel Morse deserves any more attention in this hobby than Guillermo Marconi, we never hear of Marconi elements being tested as a separate element.

We should ask questions in the written exams about Morse code as we do about the digital modes. Especially what are the Morse code symbols for SOS. I strongly support additional questions about Morse code in the written elements, and elimination of the Morse code requirement as a separate element in testing.

Way too much emphasis has been placed onto Morse code, in amateur radio. There is a plethora of modes in amateur radio and they all need to be treated equally. I strongly support removing the code requirement as a separate element in amateur radio license testing.

Sincerely, Pietro M. deVolpi, K3PD Licensed since 1970